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Week of March 14, 1988

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Week of March 14, 1988

BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT RATE UNCHANGED
IN FEBRUARY, BLS REPORTS

WASHINGTON--The unemployment rate for blacks at 12.6 in February showed little change from the 12.2 percent rate in January, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

The unemployment rate for black adult male workers was 12.6 percent, compared to 12.2 percent in January. For adult black women, the unemployment rate was 10.4 percent in February, 11.1 percent in January.

The unemployment rate for black youth was 38.3 percent in February compared with 35 percent the previous month.

The unemployment rate for whites was 4.8 percent in February; for Hispanics, 8.3 percent.

In her statement before the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, Janet L. Norwood, Commissioner of Labor Statistics noted that rates for whites, blacks and Hispanics were down substantially over the year, with early 1988 jobless rates at or near the lows recorded in 1979.

She said the rates for minorities are still quite high--for example, the jobless rate for blacks remains more than twice the rate for whites.

Over the last year, however, more than the usual number of blacks and Hispanics entered the labor force and they obtained one in every three of the new jobs, Norwood added. Even so, the proportion of blacks with jobs, 56 percent, is still much lower than that of whites, 63 percent, she said.

The Bureau reported that the for the nation as a whole, employment gvrowth was quite strong in February. The overall jobless rate was 5.6 percent, and the civilian worker rate was 5.7 percent. Both have edged down in recent months by three-tenths of a percentage point since last October.

Nonagricultural payroll employment, as measured by the survey of business establishments, surged by 530,000 in February, following a relatively small increase in the prior month. Total civilian employment, as measured by the household survey, rose by nearly 300,000 over the month.

Unemployment (Household Survey Data)

The number of persons unemployed in February, at 6.9 million, seasonally adjusted, was about the same as in January. The civilian worker unemployment rate, at 5.7 percent, also showed little over-the-month change. However, it has edged down by three-tenths since last October and was nearly a full percentage point lower than a year ago.

Jobless rates for adult men (4.9 percent), adult women (5.2 percent), teenagers (15.4 percent), whites (4.8 percent), and blacks (12.6 percent) showed little change in February. After dipping in January, the Hispanic unemployment rate (8.3 percent) returned to the levels that generally prevailed in the latter half of last year.

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The median duration of unemployment--6.4 weeks--was unchanged from January and was slightly lower than a year earlier. The number and proportion of the total unemployed who had lost their last jobs declined markedly over the past year.

Civilian Employment and the Labor Force (Household Survey Data)

Total civilian employment rose by 280,000 in February to 114.4 million, seasonally adjusted, with almost the entire gain taking place among adult men. The proportion of the population with jobs was at a record 62.2 percent. Recent employment growth has been particularly strong in executive, administrative, and managerial occupations. Over the past year, employment in these occupations has accounted for more than a third of the 3 million growth in total civilian employment. (See tables A-2 and A-11.)

The civilian labor force grew to a level of 121.4 million in February, seasonally adjusted, with the labor force participation rate edging up to 66.0 percent. Since last February, the labor force has grown by 2.0 million, with nearly two-thirds of the increase occurring among adult women.

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Week of March 14, 1988

BLACKS HONORED AT AWARDS CEREMONY

WASHINGTON--Several black employees with the U.S. Department of Labor here have been honored as outstanding public servants at a ceremony which also marked the 75th anniversary of the Cabinet-level agency.

Secretary of Labor Ann McLaughlin presented the Distinguished Career Service Award to Bette J. Settles and Gwendolyn G. Williams, both with the Bureau of International Affairs; Felicia J. Atcherson, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Christine Stephens, Office of Information and Public Affairs.

The award recognizes employees for career service "marked by sustained high quality and efficiency."

William Cato received the Distinguished Achievement Award in recognition of his "exceptional work" in improving the FECA automated compensation and bill payments systems. He works with the Employment Standards Administration.

Barbara J. Brent received the Meritorious Achievement Award in recognition of "superior performance in carrying out administrative management responsibilities." She works with the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

Blacks also shared in group awards which recognized outstanding accomplishments and contributions in the wide range of programs administered by the Labor Department.

Secretary McLaughlin said that "...in bestowing individual awards for outstanding performance and achievement, we also recognize the value and importance of the work done by all Labor Department employees.

"Those we honor today," she added, "have added another proud chapter to the department's history by accomplishments that contribute to a brighter future for all Americans."

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Week of March 14, 1988

FILLERS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The unemployment rate for Vietnam-era veterans was 5.1 percent in January 1988, an improvement over the rate a year ago when it was 6.0 percent, the U.S. Department of Labor reported.

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During fiscal year 1987, 560,000 veterans were placed in jobs or obtained employment as a result of services offered by the State Job Service agencies, the U.S. Department of Labor reported. There were more than 2.5 million veteran applicants to the Job Service agencies during this period.

# # #

Approximately 11,000 veterans were placed in jobs in fiscal year 1987 under a joint effort of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Veterans Administration through the Veterans' Job Training Act.

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Twenty-three thousand veterans were enrolled in training and 7,500 were placed in jobs under Title IV-C of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) during the 1987 fiscal year, the U.S. Department of Labor reported.

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U.S. Department of Labor

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